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Security Council

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Letter dated 26 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find attached the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of New Zealand for the month of July 2015 (see annex). The assessment has been prepared under my supervision and in consultation with other members of the Council.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gerard **van Bohemen**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 26 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of New Zealand (July 2015)

In July 2015, under the presidency of New Zealand, the Security Council held 36 meetings and consultations, consisting of 19 public meetings, 14 closed consultations and 1 private meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries. Two open debates were held, on peace and security challenges facing small island developing States and on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The Council adopted five resolutions, including a resolution endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action relating to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was concluded in Vienna on 14 July 2015. The Council issued one presidential statement and nine press statements.

Africa

Libya

On 1 July, the Council issued a press statement on the Libyan political dialogue facilitated by the United Nations. Council members welcomed the meeting of the participants in the Libyan political dialogue in Morocco from 25 to 28 June 2015, reiterated that there could be no military solution to the crisis in Libya and urged the participants to agree on a Government of national accord and to sign the proposal presented by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Council members agreed that the commitment to a Government of national accord was in the interests of the Libyan people and was aimed at achieving an end to the crisis and confronting the rising threat of terrorism. They also noted that the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya was prepared to sanction those who threatened the country's peace, stability and security or undermined the successful completion of its political transition.

On 15 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in Libya. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL, Bernardino León, said that the situation in Libya continued to deteriorate and the chaos on the ground had given way to the expansion of extremist groups. He also briefed members on the initialling of the Libya political agreement on 11 July, in Skhirat, Morocco, by some of the parties to the Libyan political dialogue. He said that the initialling signalled the adoption of a framework for further talks and that the agreement set out a comprehensive framework for completing the political transition that had begun in 2011. Although the dialogue committee of the General National Congress had not yet initialled the agreement, the door remained open for it to join. A Government of national accord would be the appropriate interlocutor for addressing the threat posed by Daesh/the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, briefed the Council on the work of the Committee from 5 March to 15 July.

Speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. the Permanent Representative of Libya expressed his Government's support for the United Nations efforts to assist Libyan parties in reaching full agreement on the various issues that would pave the way towards the creation of a Government of national accord. He stated that the agreement remained conditional on the international community compelling all sides to commit themselves to the agreement. He was critical of the activities of the Committee, which had not yet approved a request by the Government to import weapons, thus, he considered, hampering the Government's efforts to combat terrorism.

Council members welcomed the initialling of the agreement, urged outstanding parties to commit themselves to the political dialogue and expressed their gratitude to countries of the region for their support to the process. Some expressed concern at the plight of irregular migrants, who were affected by the situation in Libya. Members expressed concern about the growing threat of Daesh/ISIL in Libya and the region. Several members and the Special Representative encouraged the use of sanctions to place pressure on those who could undermine the political process, while others called for caution to be exercised in that regard to avoid any further escalation of the situation

On 16 July, the Council issued a press statement in which it welcomed the initialling of the Libyan political agreement in Skhirat, Morocco, on 11 July by the majority of the Libyan delegates. The members of the Council called upon all parties to engage with the Libyan political dialogue and unite in support of the agreement. Members expressed their gratitude to the neighbours and regional partners of Libya for their contributions to the process.

United Nations Office for West Africa

On 7 July, the Council received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), Mohammed Ibn Chambas. He highlighted continuing concerns regarding the security situation in the Lake Chad basin area owing to the attacks carried out by Boko Haram. Those attacks, mainly against civilian targets, had led to a deterioration of the humanitarian and security situations, despite the progress made by the affected countries in efforts to combat Boko Haram. He also underlined the need to be alert regarding the situation in several West African nations in the lead-up to the presidential elections to be held in October, notably in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.

He underscored that Ebola virus disease remained a matter of serious concern, notwithstanding the significant achievements that had been made in that respect. It was worrying that Liberia had detected new cases in late June, after having been declared Ebola-free in May. Guinea and Sierra Leone were still affected, and that was having a continuing impact on local livelihoods. The support of the international community, including the United Nations, would remain essential in achieving the goal of zero Ebola cases in the subregion.

In consultations, Council members expressed support for the Special Representative and the activities of UNOWA in close cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. They expressed grave concern about the spread of terrorism in some parts of West Africa, in particular the activities of Boko Haram, and stressed the need to address effectively all forms of transnational organized crime. Members commended the Special Representative for the good offices role that he had played ahead of the peaceful elections earlier in 2015 in Benin, Nigeria and Togo. Some members also noted that UNOWA should focus on not only electoral issues, but also all elements of its mandate. Members were supportive of the Special Representative's good offices role in the dialogue in Guinea, the objective of which was to hold peaceful and credible elections in October 2015.

Several Council members expressed their concern about the transition process in Burkina Faso, welcoming the Special Representative's involvement and engagement with national and regional stakeholders.

Some Council members raised their concern about the human rights situation in the Gambia. The Special Representative said that he remained engaged with the Government and that his Office sought to play a positive role.

United Nations Interim Security Forces for Abyei and the Sudan/South Sudan

The Council was briefed in closed consultations on 8 July by the Head of Mission of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Haile Tilahun Gebremariam, on the situation in Abyei and the implementation of the UNISFA mandate. The Council was also briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, on the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012) on the Sudan/South Sudan issues. The Special Envoy participated by video teleconference from Addis Ababa.

The Head of Mission outlined the progress made by UNISFA towards improving the security situation in Abyei. Noting the absence of any local rule of law and governance institutions and the continued presence of armed groups, including Misseriya elements and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, he said that, although the situation was stable, tensions still existed.

Council members considered that the steps that needed to be taken to address the underlying causes of tensions included a meeting between the traditional leaders of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya; the establishment of joint interim administrative institutions, including in the rule of law and justice sectors; and the effective functioning of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. Members noted that the full commitment of both the Sudan and South Sudan was needed to implement those steps.

The Special Envoy noted that very little progress had been made between the two parties on core issues pertaining to the implementation of the September 2012 cooperation agreements due to the internal conflicts within the Sudan and South Sudan. Regarding the Sudan, he noted the central importance of a genuine and inclusive national dialogue process and the need for that process to be fully supported by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the United Nations. A number of Council members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Blue Nile and South Kordofan States of the Sudan, where there was ongoing conflict.

On South Sudan, the Special Envoy updated the Council on the political mediation efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), noting that in his view both the Government and opposition were committed to achieving a military, rather than political outcome. The continued fighting was leading to a disintegration of the fighting forces into tribal factions. Divisions within IGAD were also damaging the prospects for peace, and it was hoped that the expanded format of the mediation mechanism, with United Nations and African Union support, would foster a more unified approach.

On 14 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2230 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of UNISFA until 15 December 2015. The Council reiterated its demand that the Sudan and South Sudan urgently establish the Abyei Area Administration and the Abyei Area Council, and urged the two Governments to immediately take steps to implement confidence-building measures among the respective communities in Abyei. Following the adoption of the resolution, representatives of both the Sudan and South Sudan addressed the Council under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure. The Permanent Representative of South Sudan proposed a refinement of the current arrangements for Abyei that would turn the area into an international protectorate to ensure security, provide services and generate socioeconomic development. The Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan noted that the issue must be examined in a holistic way, a solution must not be reached at the expense of either party and all agreements reached between the Sudan and South Sudan must be implemented. He also warned against unilateral measures, such as the decision by the Ngok Dinka to hold a referendum on the final status of Abyei.

South Sudan

The Council was briefed in closed consultations on 8 July under "Other matters" by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, and the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Yoka Brandt, on the human rights situation in South Sudan, and in particular the situation facing children. They detailed reports of serious human rights abuses and violations committed against civilians, in particular children, in the context of continued fighting in South Sudan, as previously reported by UNICEF and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

The Under-Secretary-General made some specific suggestions for Council action to bring more pressure to bear on the parties, including that the President write a letter to the Chair of IGAD and the African Union Chairperson expressing the Council's concern and urging action; that the Council issue a presidential statement, to coincide with the fourth anniversary of the independence day of South Sudan, on 9 July; that the Council immediately impose an arms embargo on South Sudan; and that the Council consider establishing an international commission of inquiry, which would address crimes committed since September 2014, when the African Union Commission of Inquiry concluded its work.

The Deputy Executive Director urged the Council to demand access to the affected communities and call for investigations, noting that government and opposition leaders should be called upon to denounce tactics resulting in crimes against children and to hold those responsible to account.

Council members expressed deep concern regarding the continuation of fighting and the reports of serious human rights abuses and violations, including against children. Members said that efforts needed to be made to support the political mediation process in order to halt the fighting. Some expressed the view that a change in approach by the Council to the conflict in South Sudan was required. Some highlighted the need for justice and accountability for crimes committed. The effect of sanctions as a tool of political leverage on the parties to the conflict was also raised.

On 9 July, a statement to the press was issued in which Council members, amongst other things, expressed profound disappointment with the actions of the South Sudanese leaders, noting that the failure of those leaders to pursue peace had resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians, the displacement of more than 2.1 million people and attacks upon and deaths of United Nations peacekeepers. The situation had also led to internally displaced persons receiving United Nations protection and a need for humanitarian personnel. They recognized the work of IGAD in leading the mediation process, recalled the designation for sanctions of six individuals under resolution 2206 (2015) and underscored the urgent and imperative need to end impunity and ensure accountability.

Burundi

On 2 July, the Council held closed consultations under "Other matters" on the situation in Burundi. The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, the Deputy Head of the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi (MENUB), Issaka Souna, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović.

The Special Representative briefed the Council on the work of the international facilitation team comprising representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which had convened a meeting of Burundian stakeholders to discuss the political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the country. He noted that, during the dialogue held from 23 to 26 June, the ruling political party, the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie, had attended only one session, with the Minister of the Interior attending on 24 June to convey the message that the Government would not participate. The opposition had stated that it did not want a transitional Government, as was being sought by the Government; rather, it wanted to ensure that elections were conducted in a free, fair and secure environment. Given this impasse, the international facilitation team had agreed to propose a postponement until 30 July of the local, parliamentary and presidential elections to allow for the creation of conditions conducive to free, fair and credible elections.

The Deputy Head of MENUB noted that the United Nations had been the only international organization to monitor the entire electoral process, with monitors deployed in 17 of Burundi's provinces. The legislative elections held on 28 June had been conducted against the backdrop of an acute political crisis with heightened tensions. The Independent National Electoral Commission had responded adequately in drawing up electoral lists and approving candidates; however, the opposition had accused the body of lacking credibility. The Assistant Secretary-

General for Human Rights said that the lead-up to elections had been marred by a campaign of intimidation against opposition parties, civil society and independent media. He further noted that there had been some worrying comments by the President's office that had the potential to trigger tensions and ethnic divisions.

Council members discussed the electoral calendar and the communiqués of the East African Community and African Union that had called for a postponement of elections. Members also noted that communal and legislative elections had gone ahead on 29 June 2015. Some members expressed concern at the preliminary assessment that the minimum conditions for free, fair, transparent and credible elections had not been met. One member said there had been a remarkable turnout among the voters and an overall calm environment during the voting. Council members also expressed support for the ongoing role being undertaken by the East African Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union in seeking to address the crisis and took particular note of the fact that the East African Community would be holding a summit on 6 July. There was broad support among members for the resumption of a political dialogue and a commitment to continuing to monitor developments in Burundi. Following the consultations, the President of the Council delivered elements to the press.

On 9 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in Burundi. The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who participated in the meeting via video teleconference, briefed the Council. The Assistant Secretary-General said that the risk of the situation in Burundi deteriorating significantly should not be underestimated. He said that a starting point was to bring the Imbonerakure youth wing under control and noted that, while preparations for the elections had been largely sufficient and Burundians had gone to the polls in large numbers, the voting had been preceded and accompanied by violence amid an opposition boycott. He also noted that MENUB had concluded that the environment was not conducive to free, credible and inclusive elections.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights began his briefing by recalling the country's long history of violence. He said that the decision by the President, Pierre Nkurunziza, to run for a third term had undermined a decade of progress in building democratic institutions and gains towards the achievement of a common national community. The past six months had seen members of opposition parties, civil society and the media being the target of intimidation and arbitrary detention and underlined the need for accountability for the gross human rights violations that had occurred during the crisis.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Burundi said that Burundians had voted in a free and peaceful manner. The high voter turnout in the elections had sent a message that the silent majority, who had not participated in violent protests, believed in the democratic process.

Council members expressed support for ongoing regional efforts being led by the East African Community and the importance of political dialogue. Council members discussed the various elements of the 6 July communiqué of the East African Community, including the concept of the formation of a Government of national unity following elections. There was also broad support for the timely

resumption of a political dialogue, to be facilitated by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni.

On 27 July, the Security Council held closed consultations and was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Deputy Head of MENUB on the holding of the presidential elections on 21 July. The Assistant Secretary-General summarized the preliminary statement by MENUB on the conduct of the presidential elections, which had concluded that, while they had been relatively peaceful and conducted adequately, the overall environment had not been conducive to an inclusive, free and credible electoral process. He also drew the Council's attention to the East African Community election observation mission's assessment on the conduct of the elections, which was similar. The Deputy Head of MENUB noted that the post-election security situation remained unstable, with reports of some armed clashes in rural areas. Both expressed support for the immediate resumption of an inclusive political dialogue among all Burundian stakeholders.

Council members expressed support for the Ugandan-led efforts aimed at resuming a political dialogue, including the possible formation of a national unity Government. Council members also welcomed the recent deployment of African Union human rights and military observers to Burundi.

Somalia

On 16 July, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmund Mulet, briefed the Council on the second joint African Union-United Nations benchmarking mission, which had been conducted from 14 to 25 April. He advised the Council that, because significant gains had been made against Al-Shabaab, the group had adapted and resorted to launching asymmetric attacks and cutting off access to newly recovered areas. The group had also expanded its presence in Puntland, Somalia, and its influence in the subregion, including Kenya. He did not recommend the deployment of a peacekeeping operation in Somalia at that time, at least before the end of 2016, stating that such an operation would be a high-risk undertaking. The mission also recommended that a security strategy be developed to support the political environment over the following 18 months and the surge in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) be continued, to a maximum of 22,126 uniformed personnel. He considered that the recommendations of the benchmarking mission were ambitious and required a joint commitment from the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union, the troop-contributing countries of AMISOM, the United Nations and other partners.

In closed consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Atul Khare, advised the Council of the intention to undertake a strategic review of the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) to ensure that the mission remained fit for purpose and briefed members on the field support implications of the review. He outlined the challenges faced in delivering logistical support in Somalia. Council members were supportive of the benchmarking mission's conclusions and the roles played by AMISOM and United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), agreed that the conditions were not appropriate for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation in Somalia and welcomed the forthcoming UNSOA review. The Council supported continuing efforts to eradicate the threat of Al-Shabaab.

During consultations on 16 July, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, briefed Council members on the work of the Committee from 26 February to 16 July 2015. He gave an overview of the Committee's informal consultations on 8 April and 1 May, the work of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group and his facilitation of a dialogue between members of the Group and the Permanent Representative of Eritrea on 31 March. He indicated that he intended to travel to the region in November 2015 to obtain first-hand insight into the situation on the ground, which some members endorsed. Some members also encouraged improved relations between the Group and the Government of Eritrea.

On 27 July, the Council issued a statement to the press condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attack by Al-Shabaab on the Jazeera Palace Hotel in Mogadishu on 26 July. The attack caused a number of deaths and injuries, including the death of a member of the security staff of the Chinese embassy.

On 28 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2232 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of UNSOM until 30 March 2016 and AMISOM until 30 May 2016.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 15 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). In his briefing, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Martin Kobler, provided the Council with an update on the security situation in the country, the upcoming electoral process and the country's economic development. On the electoral process, he spoke of the urgent need for a realistic budget and a realistic electoral calendar. He also spoke of the need to update the voters' registry and ensure that the requisite political space was available to civil society and the opposition to ensure credible and transparent elections. The responsibility for that, he said, fell on the Government. The need for a constructive dialogue and relationship between the Government and MONUSCO was also underlined. With respect to the security situation, he briefed the Council on ongoing military operations, in particular against the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri, which were being conducted in support of the national army. Joint operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) remained suspended.

The Permanent Representative of Jordan, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, briefed the Council on her recent visit to the region and underlined the paradox between the country's extensive natural resources and the inability of the State to capitalize on it in order to generate national wealth and development. She explained that, in meetings with a range of interlocutors during her visit, she had encouraged nominations for sanctions designations. She had also called upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enhance the security of its weapons stockpiles and to implement a national weapons marking programme.

Speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo underlined the

commitment of his Government to the pursuit of security sector reform and the consolidation of State authority in the east of the country. He said that relations between the Government and MONUSCO were positive and that he was hopeful that, through continued dialogue, further common ground could be found. On the electoral process, he reiterated the determination of the Government to embed a culture of democracy and stated that the release of the comprehensive electoral timetable and related budget demonstrated the Government's willingness to hold transparent elections.

In consultations, the Council expressed strong support for the work of MONUSCO and a commitment to ensuring that the progress made was not lost. Most Council members expressed frustration over the ongoing impasse between MONUSCO and the Government that had resulted in the suspension of joint operations against FDLR. The electoral process was another key area of concern highlighted by a number of members. Members discussed the ongoing strategic dialogue between the Government and MONUSCO. There was also broad support expressed for the work of the Security Council committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the recent field visit of the Chair of the Committee for the first time since the Committee was created.

Mali

Following a deadly attack on a United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) convoy on 2 July in the Timbuktu region of Mali, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning that terrorist attack in the strongest terms. In the statement, Council members expressed their deepest condolences to the families of the six peacekeepers who were killed, who were from Burkina Faso, as well as to the Government and people of that country. In addition, Members reiterated their full support for MINUSMA, including the Mission's role in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 10 July 2015, the Security Council issued a press statement in which members welcomed the direct talks held on 7 July in Murree, Pakistan, between the Government of Afghanistan and Taliban representatives as a step towards peace and reconciliation. Members encouraged the parties to the talks to continue to build on those efforts and expressed appreciation for the constructive role played by the Governments of Pakistan, China and the United States of America as well as the international community. Council members also reiterated the role of women in the peace process and recalled the need for full, equal and effective participation by women in the process.

Middle East

Lebanon

On 8 July, the Council held consultations under resolution 1701 (2006) on Lebanon and the operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Council was briefed by the Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for Lebanon, Sigrid Kaag, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

The Special Coordinator reported that there had been a welcome period of calm across the Blue Line and a clear message from all parties that they wished to avoid conflict. Recent statements by Hizbullah and Israel had, however, contributed to a tense climate. She called upon all concerned to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric. She also noted that calm should not be confused with progress in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The accumulation of a large arsenal of strategic weapons by Hizbullah remained a major outstanding obligation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004) and constituted a threat to the country's stability. She said that daily Israeli overflights over Lebanese territory and incidents in the Shab'a Farms area also needed to be addressed.

She noted that the situation along the Lebanon-Syrian Arab Republic border remained a serious concern and called upon all Lebanese actors to abide by the national policy of disassociation. She praised the Lebanese armed forces for their critical role in ensuring the stability and security of the country and encouraged the international community to continue to provide support, including in the area of counter-terrorism. She expressed her concern regarding the reported increase in radicalization and encouraged donors and partners to look for innovative solutions to address the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in Lebanon and the country's longer-term needs.

She reported that Lebanon continued to host the highest per capita number of refugees in the world and noted refugees' serious vulnerabilities, which needed to be addressed. She also noted that there was no meaningful progress on the presidential vacuum and encouraged the Lebanese leaders to elect a president without further delay.

The Under-Secretary-General confirmed that the parties were continuing to cooperate with UNIFIL and use existing liaison arrangements through the UNIFIL tripartite mechanism to defuse tensions and in response to security incidents. Coordination between UNIFIL and the armed forces was strong, including through joint exercises and training.

Council members recognized that the ongoing vacancy in the presidency carried risks for Lebanon. Many members expressed concern over the impact of the Syrian crisis, including the large refugee population that Lebanon was hosting, and underscored the importance of continued international support for Lebanon through the Council, the International Support Group for Lebanon and bilateral partnerships. Many members commended the Lebanese armed forces for their efforts to respond to security challenges and recognized the importance of providing material support. They also noted the need for both sides to avoid escalatory rhetoric.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 23 July, the Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East. The meeting was presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Murray McCully. In his briefing to the Council, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Nickolay Mladenov, urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve a final status agreement. He warned that support for the two-State solution among both Palestinians and Israelis was fading. He said that the current situation on the ground was not sustainable, as the two-State solution continued to be under threat, including from settlement construction, security incidents, occupation-related violence and lack of Palestinian unity. Activities in the West Bank, including settlement construction, the so-called legalization of outposts, demolitions and evictions must stop. The emergence of Gaza from the conflict of the middle of 2014 was undermining the belief among the population that genuine progress could be achieved. In his view, the activities of Salafi jihadists and other extremist groups were a cause for concern not only in Gaza, but also in neighbouring Sinai, where there were reports of their active support of militants on the Egyptian side of the border.

With respect to the West Bank and East Jerusalem, he said that the frequency of security incidents had decreased as compared with the previous month, but the situation remained tense. He said that 50 Palestinians in total had been injured in recent weeks and 4 had been shot and killed by Israeli security forces, including 2 at checkpoints near Nablus and Ramallah. Two members of the Israeli security forces had been stabbed and injured, one seriously.

He said that, in the absence of a political process, the rise of violent extremism and terrorism in the region presented a danger to Palestinian aspirations for statehood and to the security of Israel. He contended that the international community must work with Israelis and Palestinians to create the conditions on the ground, regionally and internationally, that would facilitate a return to meaningful negotiations on the basis of an agreed framework and within a reasonable time frame.

He expressed deep concern about the unprecedented financial crisis facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which was hindering that organization's activities. He also called upon donors to fulfil the pledges made at the Gaza reconstruction conference. More than 100,000 residents of Gaza remained homeless, with over 50,000 still sheltering in UNRWA school buildings.

Council and non-Council members spoke about the dangerous consequences of the impasse in the peace process and the lack of a political horizon within which to resolve the conflict. They called for renewed efforts by the international community, including the Council, to encourage the parties to negotiate. Many members expressed concern about the deteriorating conditions on the ground and the risk of rising extremism, and criticized continued Israeli settlement activity. Many participants mentioned the successful negotiation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action relating to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran and suggested that it was an example of diplomacy prevailing over conflict that needed to be replicated in other regional conflicts. Most participants also addressed the high

level of civilian suffering in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and referred to the situations in Iraq and Lebanon.

On 31 July, the Council issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack in Duma, near Nablus. Council members extended their condolences to the family of the victims and to the Palestinian leadership and to the Palestinian people, underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of such attacks to justice and called for immediate calm. They also reiterated that threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts needed to be combated through all possible means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Syrian Arab Republic

Chemical weapons

On 9 July, the Security Council held closed consultations and was briefed by the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo, on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). He said that further progress had been made in the implementation of the resolution, with 4 of 12 remaining chemical weapons production facilities verified as destroyed, 1 destroyed but unverified, 6 ready to accommodate explosives, and 1 that remained inaccessible for security reasons. In addition, 98.8 per cent of all declared chemicals had been destroyed. Regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent amendments, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Declaration Assessment Team had paid its ninth visit to the country in May and would visit again in late July or early August. With respect to the allegations of the use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission had visited the Syrian Arab Republic and another country and were analysing the information collected.

Members of the Council exchanged views on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). Members expressed concern at the ongoing allegations of chemical weapon use and welcomed the work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the allegations. Some members expressed concern about possible discrepancies in the declarations made by the Syrian Arab Republic about its chemical weapons programme and looked forward to the findings of the OPCW Declarations Assessment Team. Members called for continued cooperation between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and OPCW. They also emphasized the importance of seeking a political solution through dialogue among the Syrian parties. Some members referred to the need to identify the perpetrators of ongoing chemical weapons attacks and in that regard noted the possibility of further Council action through the adoption of a resolution.

Humanitarian situation

On 28 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the Middle East, in particular the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. In briefing the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, outlined the deteriorating humanitarian crisis, which he said was characterized by a complete failure to protect civilians. In his view, indiscriminate attacks by all parties to the conflict remained the primary cause of civilian deaths and injuries. Intense fighting throughout the country had caused a surge in displacement, and 1 million people had thus far been displaced in 2015. In

addition, the number of registered refugees in neighbouring countries had reached 4 million in July — the largest refugee population from a single conflict worldwide in more than a quarter of a century. He was hopeful that his upcoming visit to Damascus would provide an opportunity to engage constructively with the Government to address some of the significant humanitarian access challenges that were impeding humanitarian operations.

Council members expressed deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, including with respect to the growth in indiscriminate attacks, increased displacement, the lack of respect for medical neutrality and the fact that 422,000 people remained besieged. Many members emphasized that the parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law and implement resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). Some members commended the neighbouring countries that were hosting 4 million refugees. Members expressed support for the Under-Secretary-General's proposed visit to the Syrian Arab Republic in August and noted that there could be no solution to the conflict without a political solution.

Political situation

On 29 July, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the Middle East, in particular the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Syrian Arab Republic, Staffan de Mistura, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the political solution to the Syrian crisis.

The Secretary-General described the Syrian conflict as a shameful symbol of the international community's divisions and failures, and urged the Council to endorse fresh recommendations by his Special Envoy on finding a political settlement based on the 2012 Geneva communiqué. He said that the Syrian Arab Republic was the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with at least a quarter of a million deaths and massive displacements. There was a lack of accountability for crimes and human rights violations, and the Syrian people had been exposed to chemical weapons and indiscriminate killing devices. The Syrian conflict had fuelled sectarianism and radicalization in the country and the region. Funding for humanitarian activities continued to be outpaced by the large and ever-growing scale of needs.

He noted that he had instructed the Special Envoy to find a political settlement to the conflict, specifically through operationalizing the Geneva communiqué, which the Council had unanimously endorsed in resolution 2118 (2013). The Special Envoy's consultations had revealed fault lines among stakeholders to the Syrian conflict as well as points of consensus upon which a credible political process could be constructed. He said he was willing to convene a high-level international conference to endorse any recommendations or agreement that a Syrian-led political process might reach. The Secretary-General concluded that the status quo in the Syrian Arab Republic was unacceptable and that, if the Council failed to give its full support to the new proposal, the world would expect the body to provide a viable alternative.

The Special Envoy told the Council that the immensity of the human suffering in the Syrian Arab Republic should compel the international community to seek out even the remotest possibility of a political solution. The Geneva consultations, a set

of structured separate discussions with Syrian and non-Syrian players, had commenced on 5 May. They were aimed at stress testing any willingness to narrow the gaps in the interpretation of the principles contained in the Geneva communiqué. The consultations had revealed points of agreement, notably the relevance of the communiqué and the desire for a united, sovereign, independent, non-sectarian, multi-confessional, all-inclusive State with territorial integrity and preserved and reformed State institutions led by those who inspired public confidence and trust. There were also points of difference, most notably on the idea of a transitional governing body.

He said that, in an effort to enhance the Geneva consultations format, he had proposed thematic discussions through intra-Syrian working groups on safety and protection; political and constitutional issues; military and security issues; and public institutions, reconstruction and development. Those working groups would begin generating movement towards a Syrian-owned framework document on the implementation of the Geneva communiqué. He asked for support from the Council as a means to convince all Syrian and regional players to be involved. He added that an international support mechanism might eventually lead to the formation of a contact group.

In closed consultations attended by the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy provided additional detail on the thinking behind the working groups initiative. Members of the Council emphasized the importance of seeking a political resolution to the Syrian crisis as the only way to put an end to it and commended the efforts of the Special Envoy in that regard. They also underscored that it should be a Syrian-led process helped by international and regional actors. Many members welcomed the initiative as a way to generate momentum behind a political process. Many members also supported the idea of a contact group, and several suggested that a high-level meeting on the Syrian Arab Republic be held during the General Assembly high-level week. Several members welcomed the Special Envoy's suggestion that the working groups be held in parallel to enable discussions on how to combat terrorism to be conducted at the same time as discussions on the political track. Some members said that it would be counterproductive to underestimate the threat of terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic and the entire region. Some of them highlighted the need to fully cooperate with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and support it in combating terrorist groups. There were also calls to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and to not interfere in its internal affairs.

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

On 22 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ján Kubiš, briefed the Council on the situation in Iraq and on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-party persons and property. He said that Iraq had been living through one of the most difficult phases in its modern history since the arrival of Daesh/ISIL. The political process was moving forward, but without the needed vigour. The human cost remained far too high as a result of armed conflict and terror attacks. Civilians continued to be particularly targeted by Daesh/ISIL. He emphasized that the humanitarian situation in Iraq was of grave concern and urged the international community to do more to help vulnerable Iraqi communities. He drew attention to the reports of communities and families turning

to Daesh/ISIL for assistance. He suggested that the international community pursue a political solution in the Syrian Arab Republic to advance the fight against terrorism in Iraq.

The Permanent Representative of Iraq, speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, reiterated the importance of the key role played by the United Nations in its support to Iraq and called for a renewal of the UNAMI mandate until July 2016. He highlighted the problem of internally displaced persons and called for support for the humanitarian response plan for Iraq. He also underscored the need to tackle terrorism and for international cooperation to that end.

Council members expressed concern over the rise of terrorism in Iraq and the humanitarian consequences of terrorist activities, recognized the need for national reconciliation work to continue and called for the Government of Iraq to intensify its efforts to achieve national unity through reconciliation. One member said there was a need to hear from representatives of the so-called international coalition operating in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic on the preliminary results of its campaign. There was strong support from members for UNAMI and for the Special Representative.

On 29 July 2015, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2233 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of UNAMI until 31 July 2016.

Yemen

On 10 July, the Council issued a press statement welcoming the Secretary-General's announcement on 9 July of a humanitarian pause in Yemen and the parties' commitment to such a pause. Members of the Council supported the implementation of an unconditional humanitarian pause in Yemen, which was to begin on Friday, 10 July, and last until the end of Ramadan, and further urged all parties to exercise restraint in cases of isolated violations and to avoid escalation.

On 28 July, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. He described the humanitarian situation in Yemen as a descent into catastrophe. Approximately 13 million people were food insecure, more than 20 million lacked access to safe water, and 1,895 civilians had been killed. A United Nations-led inspections mechanism enabling the flow of commercial imports was urgently needed. The parties to the conflict continued to fail to fulfil their responsibilities under international humanitarian and international human rights laws. The humanitarian pause announced over the previous weekend had not been respected by any party to the conflict, with airstrikes and ground fighting continuing.

Speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Yemen addressed the Council and said that it was regrettable that the Houthi militia had violated the terms of the humanitarian pause. He expressed his appreciation to the Council for encouraging political efforts to find a solution to the crisis caused by the Houthi militia.

During consultations, Council members were concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen and agreed that there was a need for a humanitarian pause. Members expressed the view that the situation required a

political solution. Some members were concerned at the possibility of extremist groups filling a political vacuum in Yemen. Certain members stressed the importance of enabling commercial goods to be imported into Yemen and questioned the United Nations negotiations with the Government on a United Nations-led inspections mechanism.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 2 July, under "Other matters" in closed consultations, Council members discussed preparations for the briefing that was due to be held on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina the following week.

On 8 July, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Deputy Secretary-General briefed the Council, saying that the genocide in Srebrenica, which had occurred 20 years earlier, was one of the darkest chapters in recent history and that the United Nations had acknowledged its responsibility for failing to protect the people who had sought safety in Srebrenica. Since those events, the United Nations had worked in many ways to implement the recommendations made in reports that had identified mistakes made by both the Organization and by the wider international community. He emphasized that the Council had a central role to play in conflict prevention, adding that situations could deteriorate when the Council was divided.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also briefed the Council (by video teleconference). He gave an overview of some key events that had led to the fall of Srebrenica, such as decisions made in relation to the use of air support during the conflict. Lessons that the United Nations could learn from what had happened in Srebrenica were still relevant, with the foundational lesson being that, for peacekeeping operations to be effective, it was essential that the United Nations be respected. Without such respect, further massacres were likely to be perpetrated.

Council members remembered all victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including by observing a minute's silence. Many members also recognized the crimes committed, encouraged efforts towards reconciliation in the country and stressed the need to learn lessons from past mistakes when considering ways in which to protect civilians in armed conflicts. Speaking before the vote, two members said that voting on the draft resolution, on which major differences still remained, was not in conformity with the principle of national reconciliation within Bosnia and Herzegovina and would affect the unity among the members of the Council. Also speaking before the vote, one member said that the draft resolution would support reconciliation and recognition of the past and would call for efforts to learn from and act on the painful lessons of Srebrenica. The Council considered the draft resolution on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The draft resolution received 10 votes in favour, 1 vote against (Russian Federation) and 4 abstentions (Angola, China, Nigeria and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)). It therefore failed to be adopted due to the vote against it by a permanent member of the Council. Speaking after the vote, many members stated that they regretted the outcome of the vote.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

On 16 July, the Council held a private meeting with the countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP, Lisa Buttenheim.

On 22 July, the Council held consultations on the question of Cyprus and was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP and by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide. They welcomed the resumption of negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and noted that that positive progress had been supported through, among other things, confidence-building measures agreed upon by the leaders of the communities. The Special Adviser reported that negotiations were being conducted in a constructive atmosphere and were aimed at reaching a comprehensive and durable settlement. Council members expressed encouragement and support for such leader-led negotiations.

On 29 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2234 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of UNFICYP until 31 January 2016.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

On 2 July, under "Other matters" in closed consultations, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia notified the Council of his country's intention to submit, on behalf of the countries participating in the joint investigative team on the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH-17 (Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine), a draft resolution for the Council's consideration that would establish an international tribunal to hold accountable those responsible for the downing of the flight. He said that the proposed tribunal would have the power to investigate and prosecute individuals for criminal acts relating to that incident. Many Council members recalled resolution 2166 (2014), in which the Council had expressed its determination that those responsible for the incident be held to account, and said that they would consider the proposal favourably against that background. One member said that establishing an international tribunal on that criminal incident did not fall under the prerogatives of the Council and that questions remained with regard to the transparency of the ongoing investigation.

On 20 July, the Council held closed consultations to discuss a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation on the issue. In presenting the draft resolution, the Russian Federation said that it was focused on further implementing resolution 2166 (2014) and requesting the Secretary-General to play a more active role in ensuring that ongoing investigations were in line with the provisions of resolution 2166 (2014) and to report to the Council. During discussions, many Council members referred to the draft resolution submitted by Malaysia. Some referred to a written briefing that had been prepared by the Department of Political Affairs on investigations into the downing of flight MH-17. Many members highlighted the need to implement resolution 2166 (2014) and noted a desire for Council unity in moving forward. While many members expressed support for the draft resolution submitted by Malaysia, some indicated that establishing a tribunal would be premature and that more input from the Secretary-General was necessary.

On 29 July, the Council considered a draft resolution proposed by Malaysia and co-sponsored by a number of countries. Before the vote, members remembered the victims of the downing of flight MH-17 by observing a minute's silence. The draft resolution received 11 votes in favour, 1 vote against (Russian Federation) and 3 abstentions (Angola, China and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)). It therefore failed to be adopted due to the vote against it by a permanent member of the Council. In addition to statements given by Council members, following the vote, a number of non-Council members, some represented by ministers, addressed the Council under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, expressed regret at the outcome of the vote and underlined the need to bring those responsible to justice.

Non-proliferation

Islamic Republic of Iran

On 15 July, in closed consultations under "Other matters", the Permanent Representative of the United States advised the Council of her country's intention to submit for consideration a draft resolution endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed to in Vienna on 14 July 2015 by China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Islamic Republic of Iran relating to the last-mentioned's nuclear programme.

On 20 July, the Council adopted resolution 2231 (2015) by which, among other things, it endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The resolution was co-sponsored by all Council members.

Thematic and other issues

Maintenance of international peace and security: security challenges facing small island developing States

On 30 July, the Council held an open debate on the peace and security challenges faced by small island developing States, presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Murray McCully. The Secretary-General; the Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi; the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Miller Simpson; and the Minister of Finance of the Seychelles, Jean-Paul Adam; gave briefings highlighting the key security challenges faced by small island developing States. Transnational organized crime, including the illicit trafficking of people, drugs, small arms and light weapons, money laundering and piracy, were recognized as key challenges for such States. The Prime Minister of Jamaica identified transnational crime as the greatest threat to the security of the Caribbean region.

During statements by Council members and non-Council members, climate change was identified by many participants as a non-traditional threat to peace and security in small island developing States. Many representatives called for an ambitious and legally binding outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Paris in December 2015. The importance of supporting disaster risk reduction and the Green Climate Fund in order to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change was highlighted. Many participants identified the

leadership by small island developing States in the renewable energy sector as a primary factor in ensuring energy security and building their resilience. Pacific States called for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security with responsibility for analysing the security impacts of climate change, and for an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to those impacts.

Many participants highlighted the importance of oceans and fisheries resources to the security of small island developing States. In that regard, there were calls for greater cooperation at both the regional and international levels to address threats such as ocean acidification and marine debris. The second "Our Ocean" Conference, to be held in Chile later in 2015, was identified as a forum in which to further address some of those issues. In addition, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing was identified as a major threat to the security of small island developing States, undermining the sustainability of valuable fisheries resources, endangering food security and damaging economies. A greater and more equitable share of the sustainable development of natural resources — for example, a greater allocation of revenue from fisheries catch — was called for by many small island developing States. Adherence to international law, the recognition of protected marine areas, capacity-building for such States and cooperation on maritime surveillance were identified as measures that could address the challenges of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

In their statements, many small island developing States highlighted the inherent link between development and peace and security, as well as the fact that there could be no development without security and no security without development. Many participants recognized a need for the international community to work in partnership with small island developing States to address their specific vulnerabilities.

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

On 22 July, in closed consultations under "Other matters", the Council considered the appointment of the next Secretary-General. It was noted that the Council's discussion dealt with issues similar to those addressed in the negotiations that were being conducted in the General Assembly on a draft resolution on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly.

Council members noted the relevant provisions for the appointment of the Secretary-Generalin the Charter, the provisional rules of procedure of the Council and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. One view was that the arrangements and approximate time frames used for the appointment of the Secretary-General in 2006 were acceptable, and that the Council could take the same approach in 2016.

Many Council members supported the importance of criteria relating to qualifications in the process of appointment, as well as the issue of gender. Many members also supported a joint letter from the Presidents of the Council and General Assembly to address issues, including indicative timelines for the appointment process, a nomination procedure and candidate list with supporting information, and an opportunity to interact with the candidates in the Council or the Assembly. Some members encouraged candidates to meet with regional groups.

Some members supported geographic rotation, noting there had been no Secretary-General from the Group of Eastern European States.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 22 July, the Council issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack in Suruc, Turkey, of 20 July. Council members extended their condolences to the families of the victims and the people and Government of Turkey. Members underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of such attacks to justice and reiterated that threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts needed to be combated by all means in accordance with the Charter.

On 28 July 2015, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/14) in which it expressed its concern at the continuing threat that the terrorist group Boko Haram posed to international peace and security. The Council reiterated its strong condemnation of all the terrorist attacks, abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin region. It acknowledged that progress had been made in recent months following joint regional military efforts, commended the States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria) and Benin for their efforts to fully operationalize the Multinational Joint Task Force and encouraged increased regional cooperation. In its statement, the Council called upon the international community and donors to support the Task Force, welcomed the African Union Commission's plans to organize a donors' conference and called upon Member States to contribute generously to the African Union trust fund to support the regional efforts to combat the threat posed by Boko Haram. The Council expressed its concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad basin countries and noted affected countries' efforts to respond to the regional humanitarian needs generated by the actions of Boko Haram. Following the adoption of the presidential statement, Chad made a statement that emphasized that, while Boko Haram had been weakened militarily, it had not been defeated and welcomed the Council's call for the region to be supported in its efforts to confront the Boko Haram threat.